



State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509

Highlands Golf Course
5501 NW 12th Street
Lincoln, NE 68521

April 13, 2004
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 a.m.

MINUTES

Present: Bloechle, Curry, Gieschen, Grone, Hahn, Ham, Hultine, Jelinek, Kimmons, Lloyd, Newman, Nolan Brown, Rasmussen, Schultz, Shepard,

Absent: Kolb, Rucker

I. Public Comment: None

II. Introduction of new member

- A. We welcome Les Kimmons from the Parent Training Center, He replaces Mary Dale Christensen
- B. The other new member, attending beginning in August is Dr. Pearl Van Zandt. She is the state director at The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and will be the representative from the Workforce Investment Board

III. Approval of Agenda

- A. Tim Kolb absent so 'D' under new business will be cancelled-
- B. Sharon moves, Chris seconds, motion passed-agenda approved
- C. Approved

IV. Approval of Minutes from 2-1-04

- A. Change the date at top of minutes
- B. Also change the 4th line from the bottom on the Director's Report to say if they '*Don't*' appropriate instead of 'do'-
- C. Merwyn moves, Sue seconds, motion passed.

V. Directors Report:

- A. *IPE Notebook Update* – new notebook will be out in the next couple of weeks. A copy will be available for council members. On a future agenda, VR Program Directors, Dennis King and Janet Drudik, will give an update. Early reaction from staff is that the materials will be much clearer for consumers. Dennis and Janet are visiting offices to prepare staff in the use of these revised materials.
- B. *Budget update* – It appears that our state funding will be restored to the FY 2003 level which means that we will be able to match all available federal funds. If federal re-allotment funds are available in August and September, we may have enough state funds to match additional federal funds. The governor has written a letter stating that he will not veto Voc Rehab funding if approved by legislature. Michelle asked if there are states that traditionally turn back federal funds that are used in re-allotment. Frank said it varies, but this year

he has been hearing that more states will not have their state match so re-allotment funds are expected to be readily available.

- C. *DOL Training* – All rehab specialists have gone through the DOL training on NAIC codes, SOC codes, and other DOL resources that are used in vocational planning. The training went very well. We will link some of the DOL web sites for these planning tools to appropriate screens in QUEST to encourage VR staff to use these resources during IPE planning and job placement.
- D. *Associate Training* – Region VII RECP (Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program) provided basic training to Rehab Associates on interpersonal relationships. Workshop evaluations indicate that the training was excellent. We will build some form of this training into new staff training sequence.
- E. *Positive Psychology Training* – Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) awarded a grant to Martin Seligman, University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Seligman is the author of *Learned Helplessness* and a national authority on the Positive Psychology Movement. His theory is that thoughts are more powerful than what we may have experienced. Our belief about a bad event is more important than the event. People who choose to view events from a positive perspective will be more successful because their belief will keep them acting in ways that will lead them to their goal. The old adage is true; if you believe you will fail, you will. RCEP VII is offering the training for selected Nebraska staff as a national pilot. We will be able to integrate the techniques of this training in our Front-end process to help staff and consumers keep a positive view regarding what might seem to be a bleak employment situation.
- F. *Job Placement Standards* – Sarah Herrera will send out the new job placement standards. As we implement and refine these standards, they will be published for consumers who receive job placement services. The standards will be discussed at the August council meeting.
- G. *RSA 2004 Monitoring* – RSA audits certain aspects of the state program every year. They just issued a report for the 2003 review. The council will discuss the report at the August meeting. VR will let the council know how they are addressing deficiencies noted in the 2003 report. RSA will conduct the 2004 in July and August. The areas to be reviewed are: Quality of employment outcomes and service delivery, performance on evaluation standards and indicators, written policies governing services for individuals, homemaker outcomes, third part cooperative agreements and a fiscal review.
- H. *Annual Review Process* – We have automated the annual review through QUEST. RSA requires that a consumer under an IPE have a review every year to ensure that services are still appropriate and leading to an employment outcome. We have created a tracking system for our staff in Quest. It will remind them to complete the necessary information for the review. This is one of five “time clocks” systems that will be implemented in QUEST, hopefully by August. Office directors will be notified through the QUEST system To Do List if the review is not done on time. We’ve also revised the cost sharing system in QUEST to be in compliance with Rule 72 revisions. The Rule is at the Governor’s office awaiting final approval.) The cost sharing system helps staff look at what resources the consumer has, what services will cost, and how much the consumer will be required to pay. All the requirements are published in Rule 72.
- I. *SRC Annual Report* – SRC annual report will be out in June or July. It is distributed to the state legislature, the Regional RSA office, Workforce Investment Boards, VR Staff, etc.
- J. *Transition Parent Planner* – We are continuing to work on the planner. A draft will be distributed to the council for their input before the planner is printed.
- K. *Transition Work Based Activities* – Omaha staff completed a 2-hour work based career exploration activity for 85 students from 18 schools. Five different trades were represented and presented as an alternative option to college. Central V offices have been conducting a similar activity for several years. Jack mentioned that the people presenting were very down to earth and gave an accurate, detailed description of the job. Jack felt that it went over very well. Another one is planned for the fall. Went over some basics like punctuality, appropriate dress and drug screening – Michelle asked what was said about tattoos and body piercing. Jack said that the responses varied, but kids got the picture that their choices in these areas do matter. Michelle felt

very good about this activity – our schools don't give enough alternatives to college. She mentioned that Western Alternative Corrections is doing drug testing. From a construction company they recently tested 21 employees. Thirteen had drugs in their system. Les also commented that schools strictly do college prep and don't represent other options. That affects all children, but especially those with special needs. Studies show that kids who have work-based experiences have better outcomes. We will try to implement similar activities in our other locations as well. We need to send out time and effort developing resources in the community, not just presenting information in the classroom. Les is concerned that the schools feel they have done all they need to because they participated in this activity. Bloechle asked if this activity was taped and feels that it would be a good idea. Jack mentioned that it was considered. They will think about it. That might also give options to small districts. Michelle mentioned that it's wonderful that this issue is being addressed. Not everyone will attend college and those options need to be better emphasized.

Frank mentioned how appreciative he was that council members all show an interest in council work and tend to show that they care. Michelle also said thank you.

Don said thank you for all council members work on budget.

VI. Old Business

- A. Ticket to Work update (Don Crouch). We provided training to our staff so that they understand it, and have a system in place so that we can accept tickets. Beginning 11/1/03, we cannot get reimbursed unless a ticket is assigned, so it has become vital to our funding. We gave agreements with two EN's-with Western Voc and ServiceLinc. Regulations say that if we are jointly serving clients an agreement has to be in place. So if Western Voc has a ticket and we are also servicing the same individual, the agreement says that until Voc Rehab was reimbursed, the agencies will share payments 50/50. So far, we have approx. 75 tickets that have been assigned. Michelle asked how many of those were pre-existing clients. Don responded that he couldn't say for sure, but probably a majority. There are still a number of people with unassigned tickets.

Michelle said that she feels many aspects of Ticket program are fuzzy. SS wants a number of ENs, and are perhaps encouraging organizations that might not be standard providers or providers that are right for this program. The other issue is that people are calling saying that they have received a ticket in the mail and think that they can automatically return to work, but what if they don't have a doctor's release to return? They get a ticket and think it's time for them to return to work. Many misunderstandings.

Mike Newman wonders how many in Nebraska receive SSDI, and how many of those do we anticipate coming to us-Don said that he believes 20-25% of our clients receive benefits. There is a lot of interest.

Frank said that many receiving benefits have mental illnesses, and the only way that they can return to work is if system wide changes and accommodations are made. Frank feels that this population needs to be considered. He said that to date, there are only 1 or 2 people with significant mental illness that have gotten off benefits.

Gayle mentioned that the biggest question she gets when it comes to benefit analysis, is concerning Medicaid and Medicare. It's a very gray area, and a big concern.

Frank said the governor is very interested in mental health and it appears that LB1083 will pass. This has attracted a lot of attention, but not necessarily from those that will understand the issues. They don't understand that there aren't easy solutions and answers.

Michelle said that she feels there are some ethical problems with certain ENs, primarily in other states.

Frank feels that the big problem is that SS operated under the belief that opening this up to private groups would reveal an easy solution.

Michelle has asked Ticket to Work for the name of an agency that is efficiently using the program and can't get a good answer.

Kris Nolan Brown feels that a problem is that the mind set is all or nothing. You've either got to be on or off.

Jack said while we've heard about the work incentives for a long time, we're not hearing about results.

Gayle said that there are situations where beneficiaries would not improve their situations by going to work. She believes that the work incentives do work. She believes the missing piece is health care. Nebraska's Medicaid buy in is comparable with some states, but not as effective perhaps. This is one problem. It's the hardest problem and needs to be addressed. Only 118 people in the state utilize the Medicaid buy in program. Awareness needs to increase.

Frank said that there are three things to work on especially: the Easter Seals grant needs attention, the EN partnerships and assistive technology.

Les felt that Michelle touched on accountability, which is very important, and seems to be lacking more and more in the recent past. ENs are not accepting responsibility for client issues.

Michelle said that she went to a presentation in Phoenix by Maximus and that it seemed very unrealistic and was extremely frustrating. They did not provide resources and it did not apply to the state of Nebraska.

Frank said that employment is about so much more than the traditional VR program. The answer lies partly in partnerships so that we can find new solutions together.

Mike feels that a big problem is that the Ticket to Work program doesn't realize that getting one job isn't the whole solution. A person with a disability isn't necessarily going to get a job and keep it forever.

Les feels that Frank has the right idea, in that all the different aspects of employment can't be provided by just one agency. Partnerships are vital.

Don summarized-on the national level, Ticket has been a mess. He said to stay tuned because some major changes will probably be implemented. He doesn't feel that the program will go away. ENs are complaining that there is too much risk for them and not enough potential.

VII. Reports

A. Committee Reports-Les Kimmons joined client satisfaction.

1. Strategic Issues-Focusing on: 1st-Maintaining level of funding-not much more to be done-2nd-transition-if rehab act includes dollars set aside specifically for this program, there's not much else to be done; IPE could be integrated into the classroom-,3rd telework and self employment-VR has made some great strides with self employment, motion made that see more done with home based telework opportunities, which would tie in very well with the telework loan program ATP is trying to get up and running; 4th One Stop collaboration-work incentive grant with VR and DOL is great and making improvements in that area; 5th faith based initiatives-motion made that VR work with public Policy Center at University to increase awareness of employment, job readiness and VR's role. Sue seconds motions-motion passed-Public Policy Center-motion passes.
2. Interagency-Focuses: 1st Give feedback on annual report development in a timely manner; committee will review the annual report at the August meeting; 2nd-talked about customer relations survey. 640 sent out to VR referral sources, 42% return rate-most returns came from secondary schools. We have six recommendations-areas of state where offices were closed, not much can be done with that; VR staff specifically mentioned will get a letter saying thank you-also to the office directors; clarify transition program roles and policies, we'll continue to think about this topic; Recommend that VR representatives should continue to have further training in these areas-adults returning to work; dual diagnosis, deaf services, multi-cultural/diversity-Frank feels we already have quite a bit of training in these areas; continue to monitor case management on the time taken for a case to be processed-we think this is being addressed in different ways, including the time clocks; recommend that we do a short article on the results

of the summary-could be posted on the rehab council website. In the future, we may look at the website and make recommendation concerning it.

3. Client Services-two areas-Vicki gave background on CAP-how she approaches concerns, complaints, action taken, and releases. She's going to look back at some cases and keep us updated, so that if we see a trend developing, it can be addressed-2-IPE notebook-ways to survey VR staff and consumers and get feedback. When printed, it will go out to our committee members, and we can draft some survey questions and discuss them at the August meeting. Depending on results, we could make some recommendations in the future.

B. CAP Report (Vicki Rasmussen)

1. Sharon asked about #3-Had individual tried to get accommodations? Vicki said that her situation was unusual. The individual's paperwork was lost and the VR counselor thought the client had accommodations and did not give enough attention to the matter. Merwyn mentioned that he liked that Vicki was included the Rule 72 portions that applied to the cases. He felt like a lot of little mistakes were happening and wondered if VR was becoming a little bit too lax. Vicki said that she is now attending VR program directors meetings and presenting on her closed cases. Discussion is held to decide what needs to be done and what can be learned. Frank feels that one value of the CAP report is that we can learn from it. We can decide if our policies are clear, or if there are training issues, or just judgment calls, etc. We do look at these cases and take them seriously and it has been a positive thing. Sharon asked if Vicki could talk about number 4. Was the item costly? Did he need it to keep his job? Vicki said that the individual was afraid to go to the employer, and that it was partly a disclosure issue. ADA didn't come into the equation because the individual did not disclose. Don felt that this was a complicated issue, because employers are required under the ADA to accommodate people. Les said that it is an issue for him, so that he can instruct parents when it comes to documentation and disclosure.

Vicki has a Regional CAP meeting in Kansas City. Continue involvement with Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, Ticket to Work PSAs, and Brain Injury Council. Les felt that a notice on community bulletin boards is a great way to advertise CAP's role.

C. SILC Report cancelled-Tim Kolb absent

D. ATP Report (Mark Schultz)

1. At Your Service, 101 is one training covering ADA issues, presented by Patty Gorham-next one Friday, April 16, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. More training in fall on accessing community resources and assistive technology. We've issued a request for a proposal on development of an alternate financing program, providing no interest for telework opportunities. Telework-includes self-employment, contracted work and any home based work. Other states have loans that accommodate farmers. Both programs would include loans for adapted vehicles, including the cost of the vehicle itself, even if there was a commitment from other agencies to fund the modifications. We expect proposals to be in by May, and be implemented by July or August. Michelle mentioned that she feels ATP has grown so much over the last few years. Mark said that as an agency, they've started to provide more direct services.

VII. New Business

A. Voc Rehab staff training update (Don Crouch)

1. There has been a lot of job shadowing and one-on-one training with supervisors and office staff. Office directors and program directors will sit in on sessions with new staff and then give some constructive feedback. Employees also take a series of classes primarily in Lincoln and Omaha.
 - a. VR Process Training-intro to case process-talk about all kinds of different programs, team services, community services,
 - b. Quest Training-computer data, financial, NSOB by Cheryl Ferree
 - c. New Employee Orientation-2 days-involved getting to know who the staff are at the NSOB-general overview of agency and what we want to do
 - d. Medical Aspects 1 and 2 training on specific disabilities Med Aspects 1 features 6 disabilities; #2 features 5. The most common that we serve
 - e. Standardized assessment training-for people who do evaluation services

- f. Career Planning-for any staff that help clients do career planning
- g. Employment and Career Planning Discussion (RCEP)-how to do certain types of interviewing,-for all specialists
- h. Communication training-ass associates-new-customer services, communication, dealing with conflict (associates do everything from clerical, financial, JSS, case management, etc)
- i. Michelle asked-medical Aspects-do associates attend? Don answered yes and that we also have older staff go through this training. Michelle-What disabilities? Don- Seizure disorders, Schizophrenia, mood disorders, personality disorders, MR, hearing impairments, spinal cord, TBI, Alcohol/drug, LD-Michelle asked if we talked about dual diagnosis? Don answered that we don't specifically address that, but that some trainers do introduce those issues. Mike asked if there is anything to reference to after training? Don-yes, we have a medical aspects website if they need to refer to it.

Nolan Brown asked if there is any ongoing Spanish instruction-Frank answered no.

- B. Voc Rehab publications update: (Frank Lloyd)—Talking about purpose of publications and how they fit together.
 - a. Making it Work-available on website and also hard copy-sign up on mailing list-all SRC members automatically receive. The purpose of this publication-help students before their senior year-parents need basic information about available resources, and things that they need to be thinking about. Transition is the responsibility of many people, and there are many other programs that need to be considered. We want to bring issues to the attention of parents that they have not have considered. Divided into six sections-success story to show all people/agencies that are involved and what it takes; understanding transition; partners and planning; 'Did You Know?'-basic disability/resource info; 'connections'-specific look at resources; 'Employment' Don did introduction- VR Hasn't advocated for self-employment much until Wayne Miller came along. Today, he's going to give us a Summary report so that we can get an idea concerning where we are in this area. (Don Crouch)
 - b. Transition Services Planner-This is a uniform, consistent message for schools-guide for educators. It talks about VR and our roles, what we can do, what we can't do, etc. One feature we emphasize is that VR has responsibility to do something early on (age 14-15) mostly we get involved ages 16-18-and after high school as well-we are a resource that keeps in touch even after student has entered the workforce. There is a list that goes out to every school we have a child in for teachers to see which children we are working with or have worked with and where they are after they've graduated. Michelle mentioned that there are still some schools that aren't aware of our services-if we get report that a school doesn't have any children, we could get them further information about our available services. Les said that there are 501 school districts and 40,000 SPED Ed. Students in Nebraska. Frank said that we have 2500 of those kids in the transition program.
 - c. Quality Employment Solutions-here we want to highlight successes. We send consumers a letter when they become employed and a copy of the newsletter, asking if they would be interested in sharing their story. Then we feature three client stories every month in the newsletter. We may include some sidebars about resources, survey info, etc. We also send the newsletters to senators and invite them to respond and send the stories to local newspapers. QES is on the website and it goes out to all of our offices. Merwyn felt that the newsletter should be made more readily available to those clients that haven't quite made it to employment yet, as motivation. Frank said we could introduce this at orientation for each client or in the front of the notebooks.
 - d. Partnering with Employers-Features employers that we have established relationships with.
 - e. SRC Annual Report
 - f. Employment Warranty-Features people that have been employed for a number of years and a few self-help articles.

We want to highlight stories and real people-it's very powerful. It unifies everything when statistics just can't.

VIII. Arizona federal match increase considerations (Michelle Hultine)

- A. Arizona has a petition to increase federal match dollars 78.7% to 90%. – Wanted to know if we thought this was a good idea. It seems the federal govt, wants to move more clients over to their program-Would like feedback-are we willing to advocate on a federal level? Michelle thought that we would of course support that effort-Nolan Brown thinks we should support but there are some questions. Michelle wants to make sure we're clear about what is involved. Jack would like to know more about what Arizona plans to do. Frank does not see a downside to responding positively. Merwyn thinks we could respond by asking what 'advocate' means, and for more information, and say that we generally do support an increased federal match. Sarah will draft a letter asking questions, final decision to made after we get a response.

Motion to adjourn by Sue Gieschen, seconded by Mike Newman.